



Issue No 545 April 2024

Stonesfield's own dinosaur

MEGALOSAURUS BUCKLANDII

Buckland, 1824; Mantell, 1827

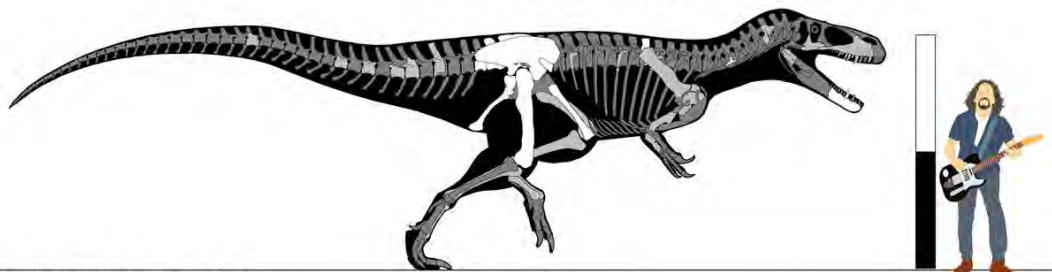
Middle Jurassic, Bathonian stage

Taynton Limestone Formation; Stonesfield Slate, Oxfordshire, United Kingdom

Specimens: OUMNH J.13505 (Lectotype), various other OUMNH & NHMUK specimens (Lectotype+Paralectotypes white, other specimens light gray)

Scale bar equals 2m, scaled as Lectotype+Paralectotypes

Total length along centra 7.73m



Creative Commons Gunnar Bivens, 2022

Stonesfield holds a very special place in the history of geology, and indeed of natural science. Its oolitic limestone is the origin of an extraordinarily wide range of fossils, including the remains of *Megalosaurus*, literally the *great lizard*, which was the first non-avian dinosaur ever to be scientifically named and described.

The Rev William Buckland, who was then Professor of Mineralogy and Geology at Oxford University and the newly-elected President of the Geological Society of London, presented his findings and reasonings to a special, packed meeting of the Society in February 1824. That was exactly 200 years ago.

It wasn't the first time that seriously large fossil bones had been found in Stonesfield by

stone workers, who commonly sold fossils to interested visitors. But it was the first time that anyone realised that they weren't bones from a horse or an elephant.

This is the reason it was so important to science: it established that these bones came from a group of creatures – the dinosaurs – that had never been described before. It was another 18 years before Richard Owen, naturalist and pioneer of the Natural History Museum in London, defined the dinosaur group of four-legged land-living animals, including *Megalosaurus*, plant-eating *Iguanodon* and *Hylaeosaurus* with bony armour. Today more than a thousand dinosaur species are known.

Continued on p4

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Dates for your diary are always subject to change. Please check with event organisers.

The editor and the publishers reserve the right to edit, shorten or omit any article submitted.

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Dates for your diary: April

2,9,16,23,30	Zumba	Village Hall	7-8pm
2,9,16,23,30	Strong Nation HIIT	Village Hall	8.15-9.15pm
3	Parish Council meeting	Primary School	7pm
3,10,17,24	Gatehouse Pilates	Village Hall	9.30-10.30am
3,10,17,24	Hannah Bathe HITT Class	Village Hall	7.15-8pm
3,10,17,24	Folk Dancing	Village Hall	7.45-10pm
4,25	Book Break	Library	12.30-2pm
4,11,18,25	Hannah Bathe HITT Class	Village Hall	7.15-8pm
5,12,19,26	Baby and Toddler Group	Village Hall	10am-12 noon
8	Monday Coffee	St James' Centre	10-11.30am
15,18	Taekwondo	Village Hall	5.30-6.30pm
15,22,29	Monday Coffee	St James' Centre	8.45-11.30am
16,23,30	Seniors' Café	Village Hall	3-4pm
16,23,30	Stonesfield Social	Village Hall	5-7pm
22,25,29	Taekwondo	Village Hall	5.30-6.30pm
25-27	Plant Sale	Bridewell Vineyard	10am-1pm
26	Spring Village Supper	St James' Centre	5-7.30pm
27	Gardening Club Plant Sale	Four Acres, Pond Hill	8.30-11am



Notices & news

Estelle Eddie

Estelle and her husband, Eric, lived in Stonesfield for 52 years and were very much part of our community. Both were staunch supporters of St James' Church and were active members of many village societies. Estelle contributed to the Women's Institute, Darby & Joan, Meals on Wheels, Lunch Club and village musicals, becoming quite famous for her monologues, plus many more activities and clubs.

I have very fond memories of Estelle. I always enjoyed watching her communicate with my late husband, Keith, who had very limited speech. Estelle was always cheerful and looked on the bright side of life. I remember her reassuring me that if she had a fall all would be well as Eric had taught her how to do a parachute roll. Estelle had a stroke whilst gardening one day and her response to that sums up much of her life: she proceeded indoors, taking her boots off first before phoning for an ambulance.

In 2018 Estelle became too frail to continue living on her own and moved to a care home in Trowbridge to be near her daughter, Eunice, and grand-daughter. She passed away peacefully there on 22 February.

Estelle: I and many others in Stonesfield will remember you with great affection.

Jill Prickett

Kevin Gwilym

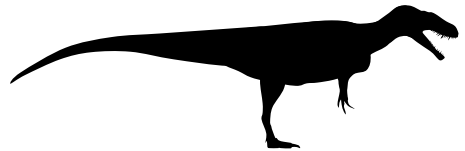
Thank you to everyone who sent condolence messages and cards on the sad passing of Kevin.

Margaret, Stephen, Sophie, Ben and Chloe Gwilym

Stonesfield's own dinosaur

(from p1)

Megalosaurus lived in this area about 168-165 million years ago, in the Middle Jurassic Period. Buckland's paper was based on a collection of enormous bones that had been in his possession for some years – all are now in the Oxford University Museum of Natural History. The exact place where they were found was not recorded.



Silhouette of *M. bucklandii* based on Scott Hartman's skeletal.
By PaleoGeekSquared - Own work, CC BY-SA 4.0

Buckland estimated the creature as up to 13m (40 ft) long and 2.1m (7ft) high, although modern estimates are more like 7-9m (30ft) long. Megalosaurus had a large head and was undoubtedly a carnivore, walking on two muscular hind legs.

This is why Stonesfield is – and should be – proud of its 'great lizard', and why one of Stonesfield's roads has been called William Buckland Way. And it's why we are

working to renew the information display at the top of Brook Lane to explain why Stonesfield is so important in the history of what the world knows about the dinosaurs.

Viv Kendall

White Horse news

It's been exciting to watch the renovation work on the pub progressing so well. It's the first of many steps in bringing the building back into use as a fully functioning community pub, and with your support the village will be seeing more refurbishment activity in the coming months.



At the time of writing we've had several tenancy applications and are in the process of shortlisting and interviewing. In terms of the building work we're instigating a staged approach, the first of which is to provide the basics of a functional pub that will allow the tenants to reopen as soon as practically possible. Along with the repairs already completed, these works are currently planned to include replacing the front ground floor window and the surrounding plasterwork, updating aspects of the kitchen, temporarily re-siting the cellar and refurbishing a selection of upper floor rooms.

Work so far has been funded primarily by proceeds from the pop-up pub/cafe in

2023 (thank you!). We're currently submitting applications for a number of grant funds that could help part-fund the upcoming phases, and we'll be sharing more details as soon as possible, including potentially reopening the share offer.

When exactly will the pub reopen? Firstly, thank you to everyone who has provided valuable advice and support to get us to this stage. With an old building like the White Horse there are hidden challenges around every corner, but we are tentatively looking at an initial reopening period around or before the May Bank Holiday. In any event we are looking forward to the building being a venue to showcase local artistic talent during Oxfordshire Artweeks in April/May.

Once again we extend our grateful thanks to you all, with a special mention to Nicky Holland for organising the recent fundraiser. We can't wait to open the doors again and welcome you into **your** pub!

Follow us on

Instagram: www.instagram.com/stonesfieldwhitehorse

Follow us on

Facebook: www.facebook.com/thewhitehorseatstonesfield

Steve Callaghan



Village Hall news

April is always an interesting month as we have lighter evenings, the days seem longer and there are definite signs of winter being well and truly behind us.

It's also a bit of a sad time as we say goodbye to our Beavers and Cubs groups, as they come out of 'hall hibernation' and head off to spend the lighter and warmer evenings outside.

Can we say a big thank you to the Repair Café for hosting the Community Café in March, and for helping us save items that would otherwise be sent to landfill. They will be back again in June, September and December, so if you think you have something that could be salvaged, don't throw it away, bring it along next time and see if one of the team can repair it for you.

We haven't had any interest in hosting a community café this month so please take advantage of the Stonesfield Seniors Café (3-5pm) and the Stonesfield Social Café (5-7pm) on Tuesday evenings during term time only.

Don't forget we have the Club Room, the Main Hall or the entire Village Hall for hire for any occasions so if you have any enquiries, please do get in touch.

Enjoy the start of spring!

Jacqueline Carthew (8098919)

Secretary & Booking Clerk
stonesfieldvh@gmail.com

Stonesfield Common

I walk on the Common two or three times a week and am delighted to see a replacement log facing the valley. For most of my thirty years in Stonesfield, this exercise has lifted my spirits and become more than a pleasure.

When the last log disintegrated, I felt its loss quite keenly, so to have it replaced is very good. On closer inspection it is apparent that a log in that place has been important to many others. The addition of small message plates signifies that importance. I think the concept of utilising the log to express an appreciation and sense of both loss and beauty is a lovely idea. I expect and hope that many villagers will use the log as a focal point and appreciate the kind thoughts of those responsible for its placing and use. The addition of the small thoughts of other villagers gives evidence to the community spirit which exists in our much-loved village.

Richard Bishop

St James the Great, Stonesfield

Spring Village Supper

Friday 26th April

Come and join us – any time between 5pm & 7.30pm

St James' Centre, High Street

Everyone is invited! All free of charge

For more information: stonesfield@stonesfieldparishchurch.org

‘And I’ll blow your house down...’ crowdfunder

Can you help Georgie take her show on the road to raise awareness of unpaid carers and family disability?



Georgie Steele, Stonesfield resident, award-winning theatre maker, a storyteller and an unpaid carer, is taking her one-woman show ‘And I’ll blow your house down...’ on the road this year, appearing at four fringe festivals.

Georgie’s theatre show, winner of the Brighton Fringe Award for Inclusion 2023, highlights the role of unpaid carers and family disability. Within the show Georgie tells the tale of the Three Little Pigs, a sensible fairytale counterpoint to her own farfetched but true story. In addition to the shows, Georgie will be hosting ‘Tell it like It is’ storytelling workshops to enable, and empower, unpaid carers to also share their stories.

But Georgie needs our help... As an unpaid carer, Georgie can’t fully fund the tour herself. The total cost of the tour will be over £4,000, of which Georgie can fund £2,000. Georgie has therefore set-up a crowdfunder to help raise the remaining monies by mid-April. If you can, please do support Georgie’s crowdfunder here (or scan the QR code):

www.crowdfunder.co.uk/p/and-ill-blow-your-house-down/backers#start

The four fringe festivals Georgie will be performing at are Brighton, Tunbridge Wells, Barnstaple and Camden. Further details can be found on Georgie’s website: www.georgiestory.com/home

Thank you for your support! And thank you also to Stonesfield-based photographer Geraint Lewis for the use of his photos, geraintlewis.com

Jess Huband



The White Horse Pop-Up Pub and Comedy Night

Thanks to everyone who came along to support The White Horse for the Pop-Up Pub and Comedy Night in March – what a Marmite (or Vegemite) evening it turned out to be, with a very wide range of audience reactions....

- ‘Well, I thoroughly enjoyed being introduced to the genre of absurdist comedy. As a lover of Dali, I’m now singing the song titled ‘Average Speed Check’ at random moments.’
- ‘If Adrian Lancini had set out to send up stand-up, he’d succeeded brilliantly. But had he? Was the complete lack of watchable comedy deliberate? We hoped so, for his sake.’
- ‘I love Spike Milligan and it reminded me of him.’
- ‘I just couldn’t sit through it!’
- ‘I said on the way out, I was too tired for this evening – how wrong could I have been. Laughed out loud right through.’

Thanks to all who helped to set up the Hall and run the bar, with particular thanks to the Stonesfield Players and the Village Idiots for the loan of equipment, sound and lighting expertise.

The evening raised a few hundred more pounds towards the renovations at The White Horse – and isn’t it looking good?

Nicky Holland

Save the date! Summer Fete

Stonesfield Primary School’s Summer Fete will take place on Saturday 6 July 2024 from 12 noon until 4pm. If you would like to be involved and/or have your own stall for your charity or business, please get in touch with the Friends of Stonesfield School (FoSS) via email to sarah@fossteam.org.

Sarah Lydiat

Blenheim Palace: new library display

Blenheim Palace has announced its newest display, the Victorian-Edwardian Library, which will showcase how the Palace looked from the 1880s to the early 1900s, as well as highlighting significant moments in its history.



Visitors will be transported back to the Victorian-Edwardian period with displays featuring historical items of interest including old books, original scrolls, archive photographs, albums and original press cuttings.

A visit to this display is included within the Blenheim Palace ticket or pass. For more information and to book tickets, visit www.blenheimpalace.com/

Soldiers of Oxfordshire Museum: D-Day 80th anniversary

The Soldiers of Oxfordshire Museum is calling for families to share their stories and childhood memories from 1944, ahead of the 80th anniversary events and exhibitions. The anniversary events will include:

- A new D-Day 80th Anniversary exhibition, exploring the stories of Oxfordshire people involved in the Normandy invasion, from 18 May to 24 September.
- Two commemorative talks: *Pegasus Bridge: In Their Own Words* will be held online on 22 May and *Sappers in the D-Day Gliders* will take place in-person on 30 May with Ingram Murray.



Major John Howard with soldiers of 2nd Battalion, Oxfordshire and Buckinghamshire Light Infantry during Oxford 'Salute the Soldier' celebration, 1944

In the run up to the anniversary, the Museum is keen to hear from local people with their own memories or family stories of D-Day, whether soldier or civilian. With Oxfordshire airbases utilised for all kinds of war work, and soldiers billeted across the county while training or preparing for Operation Overlord, many will have childhood memories of 1944, seeing planes flying overhead or speaking to some of the allied forces. Others will have stories of local people serving in other regiments or

branches of the armed forces - the Museum urges anyone with more information to get in touch using the details below.

Website (contact form): www.sof.org.uk/oxfordshire-d-day-stories/

Email: museumdirector@sofo.org.uk or
telephone: 01993 810210

North Leigh History Society

Our April meeting will be held on Tuesday 2 April and Chris Danziger will be talking about Napoleon and the Rosetta Stone. At next month's meeting, which takes place on 7 May, we will be learning about the Ancient English Morris Dance with Michael Heaney. We meet at 7.30pm in the Memorial Hall in North Leigh (OX29 6SA). All are welcome. Members' fees are £18 per year and the charge for individual talks is £4. Further details are available from Diana Power (882301) or Robert Kyte at kyterobert@gmail.com (880368).

Angela Kyte

**STONESFIELD
GARDENING CLUB'S
PLANT SALE**

ANNUALS - PERENNIALS
HERBS - VEGETABLES

SATURDAY
27th APRIL 2024
8.30am to 11.00am

@ FOUR ACRES, POND HILL

Cash only, bring a bag / box

'Early birds' get the best choice

www.stonesfieldgardening.info

Bridewell Gardens

Bridewell will be holding its plant sale from Thursday 25-Saturday 27 April, 10am-1pm. This will take place in the vineyard - the walled garden will not be open during the plant sale.

Open Days are planned for May, June, July and September, details of which will appear in future editions of *The Slate*.

Bridewell Gardens, Wilcote OX7 3DT
www.bridewellgardens.org

Combe Mill 'In Steam'

Combe Mill is a late 19th Century Grade II listed water mill on the River Evenlode which, in its day, was the workshop for the Blenheim Palace estate.

On the following dates, the Mill will be open 'In Steam' with all machinery working and children will find lots to do in our revamped 'tinkering area'.

- Sunday 21 April: April's theme will be military vehicles supporting Combe Mill by the North Oxfordshire & Cotswolds Military Vehicle Trust. Come along with the family and enjoy the day.
- Sunday 19 May: May's event is Mercedes Benz Day - a grand parade of cars will be on display providing another exciting day which is not to be missed.



Thomas Bradford Horizontal Steam Engine: late C19

In addition to the tea room for refreshments, there is a barbeque, tombola, raffle, mini-market, gift shop and picnic area by the river. Dogs are most welcome. Admission charges for 'in steam days': adults £9, seniors £7.50 and children free.

Self-guided tours: Combe Mill is open every Wednesday until the end of October for self-guided tours. Tea room open. Admission: adults £5, seniors £4 and children free.

Margaret Gruber
Blenheim Palace Sawmills,
Combe, OX29 8ET
www.combemill.org

Sarsden Glebe Open Gardens

On Sunday 14 April Sarsden Glebe, OX7 6PH, will open its gardens between 12.30 and 5pm in aid of the National Gardens Scheme which raises money for medical, nursing and caring charities. Spring bulbs and early blossom should be carpeting the wild garden and the kitchen garden will be stirring. Refreshments are being provided by Thrive North Oxfordshire and a selection of plants will be offered by Bridewell Organic Gardens. Dogs on a lead welcome. Entrance charge is £7.50 on the gate and there is no need to book in advance.

Sarsden Glebe is ¼ mile south of Churchill on the road to Sarsden.

Rupert Ponsonby

Police and community support

For information or advice on security concerns, please call 101 or contact woodstockNHPT@thamesvalley.pnn.police.uk

Politics & local affairs

Stonesfield Parish Council

From the Parish Clerk

West Oxfordshire Local Plan: The Parish Council is at this point preparing to ensure it is able to put comment into the West Oxfordshire Local Plan 2041. There is some time to go but we wanted to share the timing and process for commenting on the West Oxfordshire Local Plan 2041 with residents.

In Autumn 2023, WODC invited Parish Councils to make general comments on eight different scenarios for the 'Future Pattern of Development' under the WOLP 2041 which the Council did at the time.

Timetable for development of the WOLP 2041 and upcoming dates at which the Parish Council and residents of the Parish can submit comments: (Please note these are subject to change but are correct at time of publication.)

1. Expected late Spring 2024: Long list is narrowed down to a 'short list' of 'draft allocated sites' based on number of houses required / proposed spatial strategy / where houses are located and other relevant evidence. More information on each shortlisted proposal is given at this stage (eg. number of houses etc). This will come from the District Council to the Parish Council.
2. Following the above, residents will then be invited to comment directly on the 'short list' of sites. We understand that

the 'short list' of sites is not final as the plan would still be in the preparation stage. This is expected approximately June 2024.

3. Summer 2024: The final draft of the new Local Plan is finalised and formally published and put out for consultation. We believe that residents can still comment directly at this stage (to be confirmed).
4. Autumn 2024 - Plan submitted for independent examination
5. 2025: Plan is adopted.

If you have any questions and/or comments on the above, please feel free to contact the Parish Clerk.

Notes from the Minutes of the Parish Council meeting held at Stonesfield Primary School on Wednesday 6 March 2024.

Proposed development on Combe Road: During the public participation section of the meeting, Graham Soames, planning consultant, advised that he has produced a concept plan for the proposed Manor Farm development. An open exhibition is planned for the proposed development to gain some feedback from the village; this exhibition is likely to be in the next few weeks (April or May). It has been recommended to him that a notice should be posted in The Stonesfield Slate to let residents know, as well as placing flyers on noticeboards. We will also add information to the website when received - this is not a Parish Council exhibition and

is independently arranged and led. We can confirm that we do not have an actual planning application for the Combe Road proposed development at this stage.

Report from Andy Graham, Oxfordshire County Council: Cllr Graham reported that the S7 service to Woodstock has been restricted. Residents are reminded to use the bus service S3 which serves the village so that this service is maintained. Cllr Graham confirmed his support for the White Horse Community Pub and advised that informal discussions are continuing to see what is possible in terms of helping support the pub with grants.

Highways: We are aware that there have been some highways issues. The new sign at Witney Lane has been scheduled. It was noted that further highways issues have been shared with OCC Highways because the legal responsibility in respect of these sits with OCC Highways. Issues should also be reported on www.fixmystreet.com and residents are encouraged to use this. SAFER will be recommencing Community Speedwatch operations in the village within the next month.

Neighbourhood Plan: Discussions with the Neighbourhood Plan group are continuing and the Council receives updates at its meetings. The Parish Council thanks the Neighbourhood Plan working group for its continued work. The Council is currently reviewing some documentation shared from the group. There is continuing discussion on whether there is a need for housing in the area as there is conflicting evidence coming from various groups.

Playground and outdoor gym: The Council continues to discuss the possible transfer of the playground and outdoor gym to Parish Council control. There is more discussion to be had and clarification of costs and liabilities before it can be considered. The Council will work with the Playing Fields Association to gather more information.

Planning applications: One planning application had been received: 24/00356/HHD - 5 William Buckland Way - erection of pergola

There is no comment or objection on this application from the Council.

Log at the Common: The Council discussed and considered the log at the Common. The Parish Council in the past replaced the log on the Common and permitted a plaque to be positioned on the log.

One member of the public raised concern to the Council which brought the discussion to the meeting. Three members of the public wrote to the Parish Clerk in support of keeping the existing three plaques on the log. Councillors resolved that the log can remain as is with the existing plaques but there are to be no further plaques added to the log.

Stonesfield says Slow Down*
* 72% of respondents to the Neighbourhood Plan survey said that reducing traffic speed was important or very important.

Stonesfield Community Speedwatch (CSW) is looking for more volunteers.

CSW is organised by Thames Valley Police as part of TVP's objective to reduce speeding and accidents. You need to be able to give an hour or so a month, at times that suit you. You will work in a group and be given full training.

Email if you would like to volunteer to help your village or want more information.

SAFER@stonesfieldpc.uk

SAFER is a Stonesfield Parish Council Working Group



Megalosaurus display board: The Council also discussed and considered replacement of the Megalosaurus display board. The original board was installed approximately 20 years ago. The Council is generally in support of this board replacement. Costs will be considered after which the Council can look to approve finances. It was suggested that the School might be involved in this project.

Next meeting: The date of the next meeting is 3 April 2024 at 7pm at Stonesfield Primary School. There will be an Annual Parish Meeting in May; this is expected to be held on 1 May but is to be confirmed.

Karen East, Parish Clerk
clerk@stonesfieldpc.uk

News from West Oxfordshire

Carbon Action Plan: WODC has adopted its Carbon Action Plan to become carbon-neutral by 2030. This includes minimising the Council's carbon footprint from its own activities with a particular focus on making buildings, vehicles and waste services more energy efficient. As well as reducing carbon emissions, the aim is that this will also improve the health and wellbeing of residents.

Funding for swimming pools: WODC reports that extra funding is being made available to Windrush Leisure Centre in Witney and Chipping Norton Lido in order to help reduce running costs for the swimming pools at these sites. These funds will be used to make the sites more energy-efficient and contribute to the efforts to reach net zero across the Council's estate by 2030.

Nature Recovery Plan: WODC has revealed an ambitious vision for West Oxfordshire's natural landscape via its Nature Recovery Plan which aims to tackle the climate and ecological emergencies across the district up to 2030. Whilst West Oxfordshire is fortunate to be surrounded by natural landscapes including grasslands, woodlands, wetlands, parkland and agricultural land which are vital to the wildlife that inhabits these areas, the district has seen a decline in wildlife in recent decades, largely due to the impacts of climate change, habitat fragmentation through development, and pollution.

Move Together: Residents are encouraged to take advantage of the Move Together initiative, a free activity programme aimed to support those dealing with long-term health conditions and poor mobility. Current participants range in age from 25 years to 104 years old and take advantage of a range of activities, both in-person and online, including seated exercise classes, free home activity packs and the option for home sessions led by specialists. More information is available from angela.burrell@westoxon.gov.uk or by telephoning the team on 01993 861581.

Forthcoming elections: Voters across West Oxfordshire District are being encouraged to ensure that they have made the necessary arrangements in order to vote in the district council and police and crime commission elections on **2 May**. This includes having registered to vote, having applied for postal voting if wished, and arranging for identification documents if required. Poll cards are being sent to all registered voters at the end of March. More information is available on the WODC website.

Neighbourhood Watch and Thames Valley Police

Thames Valley Police alerts

Several alerts have been received from Thames Valley Police:

- Be aware of a trader from JH Properties/Property Management. The trader requests money in advance for deposits but does not turn up to carry out works. Further information is emerging regarding this company and residents are urged to be mindful. If in doubt, Trading Standards are able to identify whether organisations are listed as 'rogue traders'. Fraud can also be reported to Action fraud: www.actionfraud.police.uk/
- Residents are advised that a number of vehicles which operate on a keyless system have been stolen in the Cherwell and West Oxfordshire areas. These vehicles are targeted by using a device to intercept the signal from the remote sensor on the key which is in the property, thus gaining access to the vehicle and the ability to drive away. It can be made more difficult for offenders if drivers keep their keys away from the front of their property and store them in a metal tin or faraday pouch. Where possible extra protection may be provided by parking other vehicles behind any keyless vehicles, using steering locks, and installing security posts on driveways. Further advice is available at: www.thamesvalley.police.uk/cp/crime-prevention/
- There has been an increase in distraction thefts whereby offenders have been distracting customers in cafes

and restaurants in order to steal personal items such as mobile phones.

Neighbourhood alerts

Additionally, Neighbourhood Watch has issued a number of alerts in connection with consumer scams:

- Great Western Railway have advised that a scam post on Facebook offering UK residents a year's free travel for £3 is nothing to do with GWR – do not click on any link.
- Fraudsters are using QR codes in order to stick false QR codes on parking meters which redirect people to fake payment apps.
- A scam which appears to have been shockingly effective is the sending of texts or WhatsApp messages to parents, purporting to be from their children in financial distress. If a message is received from an unknown number claiming to be from a loved one in trouble, it is important not to panic: ask questions that only the loved one could answer and make it clear that money will not be sent until the questions are answered.

Information on Neighbourhood Watch is available at: www.ourwatch.org.uk/ Anyone interested in joining the Neighbourhood Watch Scheme may find details and register at: www.member-registration.neighbourhoodalert.co.uk/30/Join. Clicking on 'Join a scheme' and selecting 'Stonesfield' will complete the request.

Deanna Asplundh
Stonesfield Neighbourhood Watch
Coordinator

Education, culture & more

Stonesfield Library

The Library (898187) is open as follows:

Monday 2.30–7pm

Wednesday 10am–12 noon

Thursday 2.30–5pm

Saturday 10am–12 noon

The Library Manager will be in the library every Monday.

Val Phillips (891455)

Friends of Stonesfield Library (FoSL)

I'm a Reader

Gregory Bailey, 58, does something complicated with financial systems which he is not interested in talking about, but it allows him to do his PhD in the Historiography of the Lollards in the 18th and 19th centuries. Full disclosure: he's also my brother.

At 17, our father escaped from the rural backwater he so hated to the bright lights of London and found a job in Islington Library. He was befriended by a woman ten years his senior, who became our 'Auntie' Vall and stayed close to our family for the rest of her life. 'She always used to bring us books which had been removed from the loan stock' says Gregory. 'Many a good book we got via that route: Agaton Sax, the Swedish detective. Serafina, the giraffe. Uncle, the magnate elephant in his mauve dressing-gown.'

'Our nearest library was at Ashburton Park, in Croydon where we grew up. It felt like a long walk down there, every week,

from our house, but I just checked and it's half a mile! The library was in an old, red-brick building. It's dilapidated and covered in graffiti now. Apparently, it's a former convent. We should go back for a visit.'

'What I love about libraries is mostly, the silence and solitude, the sense of withdrawal from the world - going to a library for a reading day is like going on a mini monastic retreat. I use the postgraduate room at my university library and it is usually a quiet haven even when the main part of the library is full of students revising for exams, or - rather - checking football results, watching TikTok videos or talking to their friends on insta. It's a good place to lose yourself for an afternoon. University libraries always have forgotten corners; the Chinese porcelain section, perhaps, or the Sanskrit literature aisle, where the books slumber largely undisturbed and it is enjoyable to wander around, picking up books at random, reading wisdom about some arcane topic.'

'I also use the British Library facility at Wetherby in Yorkshire where I live and that has a similar atmosphere of solitude. Unlike the bustling British Library at St. Pancras in London, the Wetherby site is not widely visited by the public; usually there are only half a dozen people in the reading room. It is on a former World War II ordnance site converted after the war to be a book and newspaper storage facility away from London and still has that kind of atmosphere to it. There is even a canteen

serving up hearty lunches of the pie and chips type.'

'My research topic looks at ways the eighteenth- and nineteenth-century historians wrote about the fourteenth-century church reformer and his followers, the Lollards. I could not honestly recommend any of these books as an entertaining read, though! Their heftiness and wordiness take some getting used to; however Diarmid MacCulloch's *Reformation* is a superb general introduction which I read right at the start of my project. Whenever asked for a book recommendation, I always plug *Uncle Petros and Goldbach's Conjecture*, by Apostolis Doxiadis, which is a tragicomic novel about a Greek mathematician's obsessive quest to solve an ancient maths problem, narrated by his nephew. It's lighter than it sounds, a family story set on a Greek island. With a bit of maths chucked in.'

Eleanor Bailey

Pictures @ The Pub: Oxfordshire Artweeks 2024

As mentioned last month, Pictures @ The Pub will present a mixed exhibition featuring the work of some 25 local artists: many are well-established whilst others are exhibiting their work for the first time. Works will include paintings, prints and etchings, photography, illustrations, textiles, collage, metalwork, linocuts, mixed media and fused glass.

Although North & West Oxfordshire has been allocated the first week of this year's Artweeks festival, 4-11 May, our exhibition will run throughout May and we hope very much to see you – several times! More information is available from Trisha Williams.

Trisha Williams

triywnwil003@gmail.com

YOUR LIBRARY NEEDS YOU!



Time to spare?

Looking for a new opportunity?

Friends of Stonesfield Library would like to meet you!

We support the library service by sharing the opening hours with the professional manager.

If you enjoy reading and helping people, this is the volunteering opportunity for you!

We work in pairs and carry out a variety of tasks during a session (usually one session of 2-3 hours per month).

Interested?

Come along to Stonesfield Library to find out more or contact Mike Pollitt on 01993 891856.

Local history: Wilcote Manor

2 miles south west of Stonesfield



Wilcote Manor is Grade II listed and constructed from colour-washed limestone rubble, with two buttresses to the front and a gabled stone slate roof. It stands on a hilltop towards the north-east end of the parish of North Leigh, presumably on the site of the medieval manor house.

The course of Akeman Street, the Roman road linking Cirencester with London, forms part of the northern boundary of the parish. A Roman villa at nearby Shakenoak Farm was excavated in the 1960s, the findings of which are on display at the Ashmolean. The villa was built late in the first century ADE, after which the site was abandoned and left unoccupied for about two hundred years. It was reoccupied from the 7th century until the middle of the 8th century.

The Domesday Book of 1086 records that after the Norman conquest of England the manor of Wilcote had become one of the many Oxfordshire estates held by William of Normandy's half-brother Odo, Bishop of Bayeux. In 1082 Odo was disgraced and spent the next five years in prison, his English estates being taken back by the king.

Later Wilcote, among other manors, was granted to Manasser Arsic as part of his

barony of Cogges. Ownership of Wilcote followed the line of descent until 1241 when Joan Arsic sold her share to Walter de Grey, Archbishop of York. In 1242-43 Cogges was divided and by 1245 the Archbishop had given his estate in Cogges to Sir Walter de Grey. It remained with the Grey family until 1367 when it seems to have passed back to the Crown.

The Manor then came into the hands of John and Joan London who also held land at Charlbury and in 1372 they sold Wilcote to William Wykeham, Bishop of Winchester. During the 1380s the Manor was held by the Bishop's foundation of New College, Oxford, but in 1392 William settled Wilcote on Thomas Perrott, later Thomas Wykeham. Between 1410 and 1421 the estate passed to Thomas's mother-in-law, Elizabeth, who retained possession until at least 1433 and possibly later, although on her death in 1445 no mention was made of Wilcote among her lands.

The Manor was acquired by the Lovel family and was held by William, Lord Lovel, followed by his son and his grandson, until the latter's lands were forfeited to the Crown in 1485. Wilcote appears to have been among the Oxfordshire estates granted by the Crown in 1485 to Jasper Tudor, Duke of Bedford, and in 1514 to Thomas Howard, Duke of Norfolk. Thomas Howard was succeeded by his son, also Thomas, who apparently sold Wilcote back to the king in 1540. In 1543 Wilcote was bought by Sir Thomas Pope, Earl of Downe, and formed part of the settlement made on his daughter Elizabeth's marriage in 1660 to Sir Francis Lee of Ditchley.

The estate was bought in 1667 by John Cary who passed it to his son the Revd

Wilcote Manor circa 1900



Francis Cary who died in 1711. The estate then passed through his descendants remaining in the Cary (and by marriage Pickering) family until 1936 when it was sold to Oliver Stephens of Warminster. John Collier of Gray's Inn, London, bought the Manor in 1937 at which time the landed estate was divided, with Wilcote Grange and about 200 acres being acquired by Eric Boston, and Wilcote Manor by Antony Norman.

By 1938 the house was virtually derelict and in that year the east front was buttressed, the house extensively restored, and the gardens were laid out. Some 18th century panelling in the house was used as a model for the decoration of the principal rooms. By 1987 the oldest part of the house was the south wing dating from the early 17th century which comprised a substantial parlour block, originally with two rooms on each floor, and a newel stair remaining to one side.

Antony Norman was succeeded in 1972 by his nephew Sir Mark Annesley Norman, 3rd Baronet. Sir Mark was High Sheriff of Oxfordshire from 1983 to 1984 and a Deputy Lieutenant of the county in 1985.

On the death of Sir Mark in 2013, the baronetcy passed to his elder son, Sir Nigel James Norman.

Wilcote Manor is not open to the public.

Lady Well, Wilcote

Lady Well, also known as Lady's Well or sometimes Bridewell. It can be reached via a public footpath heading south from Wilcote through an avenue of pollarded ash trees.



Lady Well: Martin Haigh

It is an old well, surrounded by a wall, with stone steps going down to it. Local people used to mix water from the well with liquorice, sugar and peppermint to make a cure-all to help keep them healthy in the coming year. The name Bridewell might indicate that the well was once considered connected to St. Bridget, a saint known for her acts of healing.

Paul Bates

Clubs, societies & sport

England Under-21 Short Mat Bowls Team



Stonesfield brothers Dyllan (13) and Thomas (10) England were part of a seven-strong Oxfordshire contingent in the England Under-21 Short Mat Bowls team that played Wales under-21s at Carmarthen on 10 March. Wales were victorious in a closely fought game by 48 points to 40.

Dyllan said, 'It was a great day and a honour to play for my country'. Dyllan and Thomas both play at Charlbury Bowls Club which has an outstanding record of developing young players, from age seven beginners to internationals. Anyone interested in taking up the sport may telephone 01993 868134 or email to enquiries@charlburybowls.co.uk



Stonesfield Gardening Club

March's meeting was a lively talk given by Paul Williams, previously head gardener at Bourton House and creator of East Court, Charlton Kings.

Paul spoke about the solanaceae family, otherwise known as nightshades. These range from, on the one hand, deadly nightshade, to be avoided at all costs, to potatoes and tomatoes, staples of our diet.

Potatoes are financially very important in the UK - six billion packets of crisps are sold each year, bringing in revenue of £2.6bn. There are almost 4,000 different varieties of potato in the world, rather more than the three or four that members said they grow. Although many nightshades have the classic small potato-like flower, some of the family are grown for their showy flowers, such as datura and brugmansia, although these will not survive outside during our winters.

Paul also brought with him a collection of objects that he has found during gardening or travel, a wonderful array of interesting seed heads, ammonites, fossils and a huge number of Victorian clay pipes.

In April our focus will be on the Plant Sale, this year to be held on Saturday 27 April from 8.30 to 11am. As usual, you need to get there in good time to bag a bargain!

Hope to see you there.

Diane Bates

Secretary, Stonesfield Gardening Club

www.stonesfieldgardening.info

Repair and Community Café

Thank you to everyone who supported the Repair and Community Café in March. We are two separate teams who work together to stage each quarterly event.

There is nothing quite like the hum of happy chatter in the Community Café that runs alongside the repair team. Whether you pop in for coffee (and cake of course), join us for lunch, are waiting to be reunited with your repaired item, need a warm place to sit for a while, or you stumble across us while out and about, you are welcome. We love an opportunity to catch up with old friends and make new ones.

Everything we serve is lovingly made by volunteers, either re-purposing surplus food from the Oxford Food Hub or donating their own ingredients. This means that the donations you give are all used to support households in the village that are finding things a bit tough. Our March café, thanks to your generosity, raised a whopping £542 and that will make a huge difference.



One happy customer of the repair service writes: 'I have a Kenwood liquidiser, and its jug developed a crack. I bought a replacement online but it didn't fit the blade from the old one. I took it to the Repair Café, where one of the kind repairers realised that the aperture at the base of the new jug was fractionally too small. He took a piece of sandpaper to it - and lo and behold, I now have a working liquidiser again. The satisfaction was twofold: not only did I not have to throw both the old and the new jugs away; I also didn't have to involve a white van collecting my faulty replacement and another van bringing me another (always assuming I could fathom out the returns process, which would have cost me a fruitless hour and remained unsolved). Thank you to all the skilful repairers and the brilliant folk who organise this service. It is much appreciated.'

If you found the repair service invaluable too or enjoyed coming to the café, please do spread the word. We look forward to seeing you at the next one on 1 June.

Mike Sofroniou and Susan Rudlin

Stonesfield Food Group

Social and Seniors' Café: The Seniors' Café takes place on Tuesday 3-4pm and the Social (all welcome) is on Tuesday 5-6.30pm, both term time only at the Village Hall. We really appreciate the help that volunteers provide to support the Social and Seniors' Café - thank you so much! Unfortunately, due to a variety of circumstances, several of our helpers and cooks have had to step back from the Social. We hope that for some of them this will be temporary and that they will choose to return! In the meantime, if you are able to do any **extra volunteering**, even for part of a session, then you will be given a very warm welcome. We are lucky to have such amazing cooks and bakers volunteering for us, but it would be marvellous to welcome a few more. It's not too hard as you can cook at home or in the Village Hall, and you can even make ahead of time, as we have freezers. This means you're not tied to cooking on a Monday evening or a Tuesday. If you are interested, why not try cooking one week with no further commitment? Just let me know if you'd like a cooking slot. It's really satisfying to know that we are rescuing perfectly delicious food from being wasted - give it a try...

Environmental impact: Talking of rescuing food, on certain weeks we have tried to measure our effect. We don't always have capacity to weigh the food from the brilliant Oxford Food hub, but on just one week we saved nearly 45kg of perfectly good food from being thrown away, and had only one small food caddy bag of waste. To put it another way, we are regularly making 70 portions of food each week from wonderful food that would otherwise be thrown away. Our menus

have continued to be plant focused and have included some fabulous salads with cauliflower and avocados. Doing ourselves good and doing the planet good- you can't beat it! We offer a take-away service, and encourage our customers to bring their own reusable containers.

Added benefits: The arty crew had lots of fun activities, including making very dinky key rings with Claire, Mould and Aoife - a very popular activity and one which required careful pencil control! The finished results looked incredibly cute. During Claire's absence, our Duke of Edinburgh Award students have really stepped up to make sure the children don't miss out on these stimulating art activities - thank you.

Community Café: The combined Repair and Community Café report gives details of the most recent event. Thank you to the Food Group members who put on the regular Community Café which supports the Emergency Food initiative.

Noticeboard: Thanks to Helen Atkinson, a Food Group member, the Club Room noticeboards have been refurbished and are looking really smart. We will use one to display the arts and crafts from our sessions and the other will have the information on the menus and allergens for events held in the Village Hall. In addition, we will display information about services and events locally.

Chocolate talk: Some of the group members attended a talk on the history of chocolate at the Charlbury Society. There is no truth in the rumour that we were just there for the samples; we came away much more knowledgeable than when we arrived! We hope to arrange more visits for

the members – why not join us and find out more?

Emergency food help: One of the aims of the Food Group is to support Stonesfield residents who are struggling to afford nourishing food. We are able to do this using the funds raised by the Community Cafés run alongside the Repair Café, and through other generous donations. We are currently able to offer **food parcels**. If you, or someone you know, could benefit, please contact Kate Harris on kateharris58@yahoo.co.uk or 01993 898781. If you are able to, you can support the food parcel initiative by donating **tinned** meat pies, hotdogs, meatballs, chicken, or ham. They can be left in the brown box on the doorstep of 6 Brook Lane.

For more information, contact Julie Curran at juliecurrano@gmail.com

Find us on Facebook – Stonesfield Social

Kate Winstanley

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STONESFIELD CRICKET CLUB

Please contact Jack Barker on 07975 863377 to register your team

STONESFIELD VOLUNTARY TRANSPORT SCHEME

Our volunteer drivers are available to take you to local medical appointments or to the hospitals in Oxford and Banbury.

We make no charge but welcome a donation towards expenses.
COVID safety precautions are still in place, if you need them.

**Please call or email to book transport in April:
Viv Kendall 01993 891803 or stonesfieldvts@gmail.com**

Stonesfield Football Club

This month sees the Firsts back on centre-stage and it has been an eventful one despite only playing three games. It started off with a blockbuster 9-0 win away at Leaffield in the second round of The Fred Ford. Everything clicked into place in a fabulous performance that saw the return of Cary Rice to first team football and he crowned it by scoring one of the goals! That result set up the first of a double-header against high-flying Hook Norton (both away). The first game was in the third round of The Fred Ford and our boys put in a great performance to advance to the quarter finals with a 4-2 win. I'm sure they are happy to make progress in the cup but when they returned to Hook Norton on league duty, a week later, they were well-beaten (5-2). The pragmatists among you would've happily swapped those results around with league points being hard to come by this season. Our boys are currently third from bottom of the league and we're now at that stage of the season where every point is a well-guarded prisoner!

It's also been a topsy-turvy month for the Reserves. They travelled to Sherborne Harriers and in a thrilling match, lost out by the odd goal in five (3-2). Next up they hosted Heyford Athletic Res but lost (3-1) in what was an evenly-matched contest. They were then back on the road to Faringdon Town 'A' and returned triumphant with all three points following a fabulous 3-1 win. These results see them in tenth place (out of 14) in Division 3; they are doing reasonably well but it would be good to see them higher up the table.

It is with great pleasure that I can announce that, after two months of sitting on the shelf, the Fredo has finally been won! A hat-trick from Jacob Oliver in the 9-0 thrashing of the hapless Leaffield, sees one of the young-guns stealing the limelight. It's great to see the younger lads making that step up to the Firsts and doing a great job. 'Jacob Oliver, Fredo Award Winner for March 2024' and richly deserved!

Tom Flanigan (891979)

STONESFIELD LUNCH CLUB

Stonesfield Lunch Club meets every Weds 11 till 2 (for members) at the St James' Centre.

Lunch Club provides a social occasion, friendship and support for our more mature residents along with refreshments, activities and a freshly cooked 2-course meal each week.

Volunteers are always welcomed for many roles and this is a lovely way to be involved in village life. Contact me if you would like more information on becoming a member or in volunteering.

Kate Harris 01993 898781 or kateharris58@yahoo.co.uk

Church news

Church of England Worship at St James the Great, Stonesfield

(Benefice of Stonesfield with Combe Longa)

www.stonesfieldparishchurch.org

Rector: Rev Ralph Williamson,
rector@scbenefice.org, 01993 891872

Churchwarden: Lindsey Sellar
stonesfield@stonesfieldparishchurch.org

St James' Centre bookings:
sjcsbookings@gmail.com

For any enquiries or help, including pastoral support, please do contact us.

From the Rector: New Life

In February I had the opportunity to visit friends in Delhi who have been involved with a small Indian charity. Founded in 2002, it worked to prepare poor children for mainstream school and supported them throughout their education, to combat non-attendance and drop-out from education. For many years my wife and I promoted this charity and raised money to support it, and I have visited teachers, families and staff there regularly. Sadly, a combination of the death of its founder and Covid led to its closure in 2020, so this visit after four years was simply a chance for me to meet and thank those involved, and to see how people's lives have moved on.

The charity had four small teaching centres, but the hardest to work in was the one in which they first began, a slum

community stuck in a cycle of poverty, resistance to education, and a perceived failure on the part of adults to enable their children to succeed. It was easy to categorise that community as hopeless, not deserving of further help, and a waste of everyone's efforts. In any country it is possible to define one group of people as beyond help - and to feel that 'those people' will never change. But the founder of the charity, Asha, would never accept this. She dedicated herself to serving the people of that community as the ones most in need of help. I miss her very much as she was a great friend and inspiration. But after my recent visit I wish I could tell her just how much difference her work and dedication has made.

A scruffy child I met in the slum in 2009 had started attending our teaching centre at the age of five, and was mentored there to the end of her school studies. Now a woman in her mid-twenties, she called me last week on WhatsApp to tell me, in good English, that she is now working as cabin crew for an Indian airline, and after a successful year she is being trained to work on international flights. Others from the same background and of similar ages have also done well. One, whose family I visited in February, works as a successful saleswoman for a national brand. Others work in offices, and some have made good marriages to educated partners and now live in proper flats in Delhi's growing suburbs. This is a million miles away from the experience and suffering of their parents as cleaners, day labourers and

rickshaw pullers, living in crowded and unsanitary homes and looked down on for their poverty. A slow transformation is underway in that community for young women and men, but also for their families, their siblings and neighbours, who now have hope of a better future and can see the difference which education makes.

For me, this is a reminder that charities and governments can make a huge difference to the bleakest lives through careful and patient work to create the conditions in which people can flourish. To make this happen requires patient effort and sacrifice but it cannot happen unless we see the value and potential of each and every human being, the value and potential which God also sees in us. The message of Easter is that God loved us so much that he sent his Son to live, die and rise for us. The message of the gospels is that God made everyone and everything in love, is patient and compassionate with us, and will not write us off as beyond redemption. Christ's death bears witness to God's unending love, and his resurrection is the promise of abundant life if we will accept it. Please join us in this joyful Easter season to worship and thank the One from whom all love flows.

Revd Ralph Williamson

Church services:

Sunday 7 April [Second Sunday of Easter]

8am	Stonesfield	Holy Communion [BCP/said]
9.30am	Combe	All Age Worship
11am	Stonesfield	All Age Worship

Sunday 14 April [Third Sunday of Easter]

8am	Stonesfield	Holy Communion [BCP/said]
9.30am	Combe	Parish Communion
11am	Stonesfield	Parish Communion

Sunday 21 April [Fourth Sunday of Easter]

8am	Stonesfield	Holy Communion [BCP/said]
9.30am	Combe	Parish Communion followed by APCM at 10.30am
11am	Stonesfield	Parish Communion

Sunday 28 April [Fifth Sunday of Easter]

8am	Stonesfield	Holy Communion [BCP/said]
9.30am	Combe	Parish Communion
11am	Stonesfield	Parish Communion
5pm	Combe	Evensong

Wednesdays

9.30am	Stonesfield	Holy Communion (10th, 17th, 24th)
11am	Combe	Morning Prayer (10th, 24th)

Stonesfield Methodist Church

Services for April

Sunday 7	11am	The Revd Stephen Bywaters Holy Communion
Sunday 14	11am	Kath Skinner
Sunday 21	11am	The Revd Andrew Biggs
Sunday 28	11am	The Revd Ian Worrall

World Day of Prayer

My thanks to those of you who came and supported the World Day of Prayer on 1 March. It was a very moving Service with the Christian Women of Palestine reaching out to all people living in war-torn countries. They shared passionate prayers willing peace and unity.

The kind gifts given towards the work of the W.D.P. charity amounted to £175; sincere thanks on its behalf. Many worthy support groups around the world will receive grants from the charity during the year.

May you, and I, continue with the prayers for Palestine and for all places of conflict, a small but important action we are able to offer each day.

Come to a Service soon.

Kathleen Albért (891733)

New Church thought

It's the season of Lent, and Ramadan, and pondering on our lives and motivations. Swedenborg comments in his books that 'Our sins are not forgiven when we say we repent; they are forgiven when we change our lives.' In other words, actions speak louder than words: I must actually change how I behave as evidence that I'm trying to amend my life. (Sometimes there's a bit of 'fake it till you make it' involved here too.)

It's not that the Lord is unforgiving - he is forgiveness itself - but I need to make an effort to show that I really mean to change. 'Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and dine with him, and he with me.' Revelation 3:20

Dale Morris (898210)

Roman Catholic Worship

Our Father

The 'Our Father' is a universal prayer for all Christians; it's fundamental to our Christian life. Quoting Archbishop of Birmingham, Bernard Longley: 'It teaches us everything we need to know about prayer and is a summary of the whole gospel.' Archbishop Bernard goes on to say: 'The Our Father captures beautifully and succinctly the two greatest commandments – to love God with all our heart, mind, soul and strength and our neighbour as ourselves' (Matt 22: 36-40)

So complete and wonderful is the Our Father that St Augustine (of Hippo) said: 'Run through all the prayers in Scripture and I do not think you will find anything in them that is not contained and included in the Lord's Prayer.'

The Our Father is a kind of creed, a proclamation of what we believe, celebrate and live. Therefore, we don't pray 'My Father', but 'Our Father' because when we pray we join ourselves in love and solidarity to the worldwide community of believers. Every time we say the Our Father we express not only our love for God but God's love for everyone.'

Walk with me, Easter 2024.

Weekday Mass times:

Wednesdays: 9.15am

Fridays: 9.15am

For Parish updates, more information and further support, please go to www.stteresaschurch-charlbury.com/ or contact Fr. Clive Dytor, Parish Priest: fr.clive.dytor@rcaob.org.uk

Aid to the Church in Need

Pilgrimage: Durham and Lindisfarne, 22-27 July 2024. For further information please contact Suze Mathews: suzemathews899@btinternet.com

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BLenheim ESTATE

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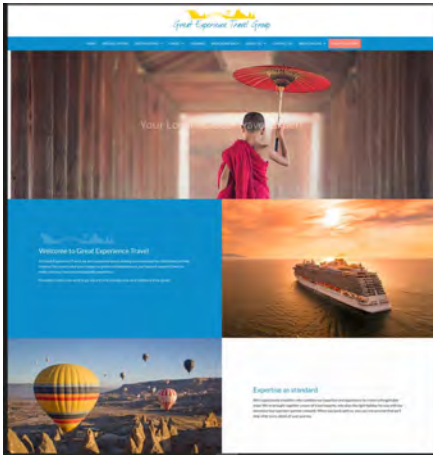
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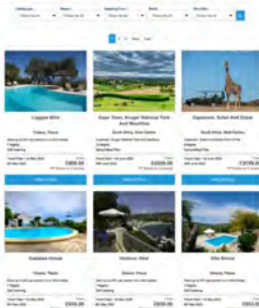
It has lots of exciting new features, and we think that the website looks great. However, it is still a 'work in progress' and has to meet your needs.

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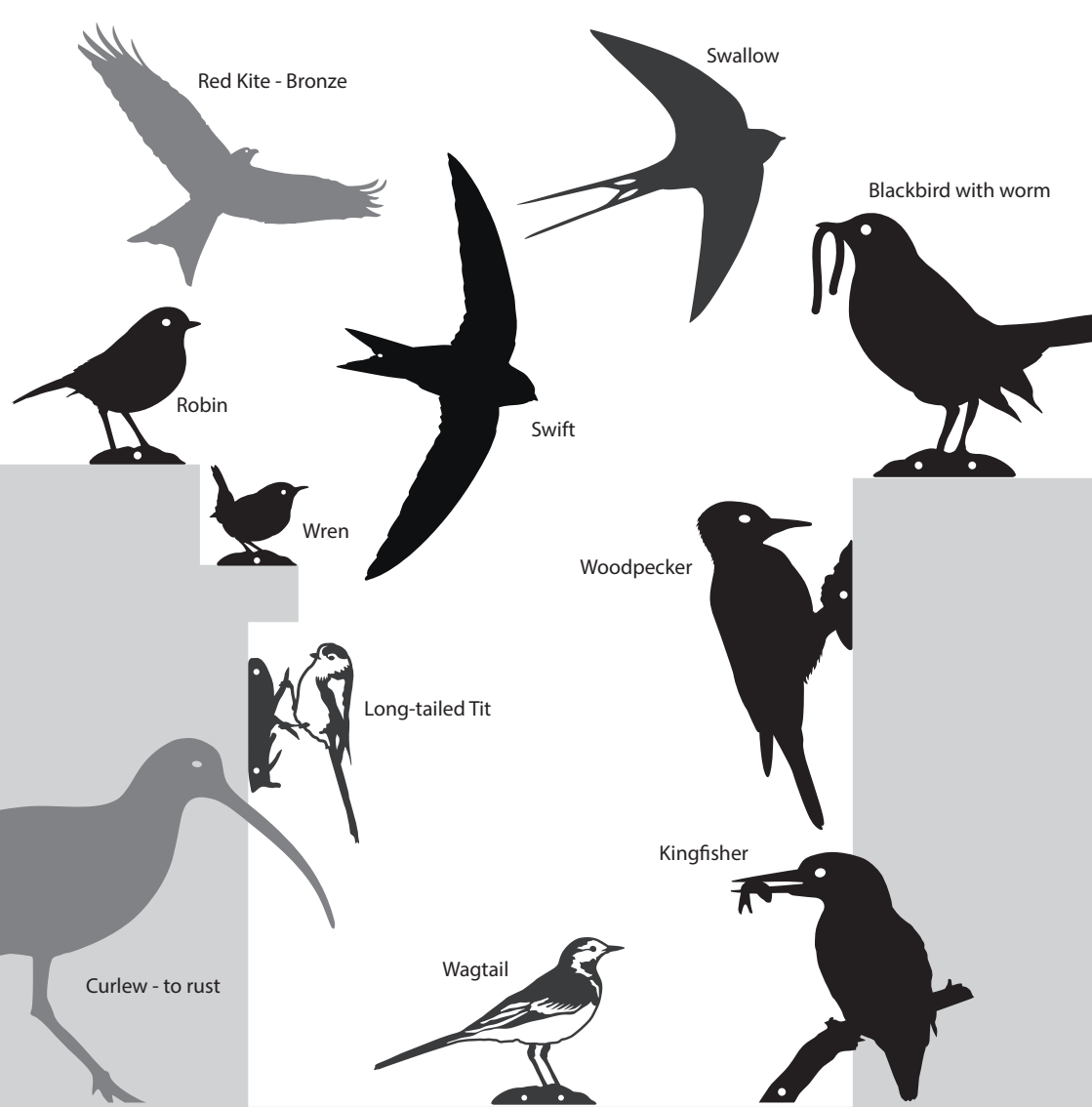
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